



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Pilot program offers environmentally sound disposal option for E&P waste

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is currently conducting a pilot program to allow exploration and production waste, also known as E&P waste, to be disposed of at three Type I landfills which are designed to accept industrial solid waste. E&P waste is waste that is produced during oil and natural gas exploration and production. It includes drilling mud and waste derived from cleaning up oil spills.

Louisiana regulations state that E&P waste may be disposed of at facilities approved by the Department of Natural Resources or at a facility designated by DEQ. In July, DEQ issued administrative orders on consent allowing three facilities that are currently permitted to accept industrial solid waste to temporarily accept what is commonly called E&P waste. Those landfills are Riverbirch in Jefferson Parish and CWI-White Oaks in Ouachita Parish, and LaSalle/Grant in LaSalle Parish.

All landfills in Louisiana which are permitted to accept industrial solid waste have liners, groundwater monitoring systems and leachate collection systems. The permits for these facilities have testing parameters in place to monitor the leachate, groundwater and surface water. The AOCs require additional parameters to be monitored.

Prior to the administrative orders, there were no landfills in Louisiana that were allowed to accept E&P waste. However, DEQ is allowing the three Type I landfills to accept the industrial solid waste because of the increased oil and gas production in the state, the proximity of landfills capable to accept industrial solid waste and the environmental regulations placed upon these landfills.

“We initiated this project because it makes sense when it comes to protecting the environment,” said Cheryl Nolan, Assistant Secretary DEQ. “There have always been Type I landfills in the state that meet the environmental regulations needed to accept industrial solid waste. However, prior to the pilot program, none were approved by DEQ to accept E&P waste. With the growth of oil and gas production throughout Louisiana, this pilot program gives industry an opportunity to dispose of E&P waste in an environmentally sound manner, while providing a good economic option for disposal.”

Under state regulations, E&P waste is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Natural Resources. However, the Department of Natural Resources regulations provide for the option to dispose of E&P waste in a DEQ-approved landfill. Once E&P waste is disposed in a DEQ-regulated landfill, it becomes subject to DEQ’s solid waste regulations.

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